

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 02942 281417Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-09 OES-07 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 OIC-02 EB-07 L-03 /059 W
-----290410Z 115747 /12
R 281320Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8154
INFO USUN NEW YORK 584

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 2942

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PLOS KU
SUBJECT: LOS: DR. ZAIM ARIF IMAM, KUWAIT LOS DELEGATION

REF: STATE 121557

1. REF. RETRANSMITTED USUN'S REQUEST FOR EMBASSY APPRAISAL OF
SUBJECT: IN VIEW OF STATEMENTS HE REPORTEDLY MADE DURING G-77
MEETING MAY 19.

2. ACCORDING TO LOCAL MFA CONTACT, DR. IMAM HAS BEEN FOR MORE
THAN 10 YEARS THE LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE KUWAIT UN MISSION; HE HAS
RESIDED IN THE U.S. FOR SOME 13 TO 15 YEARS. (APPARENTLY, IMAM
HOLDS A KUWAITI PASSPORT, BUT HE MAY BE OTHER THAN A KUWAIT CITIZEN--
IT IS ROUTINE FOR GOK-HIRED FOREIGN ARAB EXPERTS TO HOLD KUWAITI
PASSPORTS.) IMAM IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE LEADING LOS "EXPERT" ON
THE KUWAIT LOS DELEGATION, THOUGH THE LEADER OF THE DELEGATION IS
ABDALLAH BISHARA (UN PERM REP).

3. EMBASSY HAS NO FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF IMAM AND NO SOLID
INFORMATION ABOUT IMAM'S ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF KUWAIT'S LOS
POSITION. IN THE COURSE OF INQUIRING AT THE MFA ABOUT IMAM,
HOWEVER, THE SEABEDS ISSUE DID COME UP. IN TALKING ABOUT
IMAM, A JUNIOR OFFICER ON THE KUWAIT LOS DELEGATION (NOT YET
DEPARTED FOR NEW YORK) SEEMED ANXIOUS TO DISCOVER WHETHER THE
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PAGE 02 KUWAIT 02942 281417Z

U.S. HAD ANY NEW SEABEDS REGIME (ALTERNATIVE TO THE "PARALLEL
SYSTEM") TO PUT ON THE TABLE AT THE CURRENT LOS SESSION IN NEW YORK.
WHEN TOLD THAT EMBOFF KNEW OF NO NEW USG ALTERNATIVE AND EXPECTED
NONE, MFA OFFICER COMPLAINED THAT THE MFA HAD RECEIVED NO REPORT-
ING FROM ITS DELEGATION IN NEW YORK, SINCE THE START OF THE CURRENT
LOS CONFERENCE, SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE "PARALLEL SYSTEM IS
UNACCEPTABLE TO G-77, AND REQUESTED EMBOFF TO KEEP MFA POSTED ON

COMMITTEE ISSUES AS THEY DEVELOP PRIOR TO JUNE 10, WHEN OFFICER DEPARTS FOR NEW YORK.

3. COMMENT: WE CONCLUDE THAT THE KUWAITI UN/LOS DELEGATION IS OPERATING WITH CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY, AS IT USUALLY DOES, AND THAT IT MAY BE PROTECTING ITS AUTONOMY ON LOS ISSUES BY KEEPING THE MFA IN THE DARK. ON THE QUESTIONS OF IMAM'S STANDING IN THE GOK AND LAITUDE TO SPEAK FOR KUWAIT, WE DOUBT THAT HE HAS MUCH INDIVIDUAL POWER, BUT HIS RELATION WITH PERMREP BISHARA WOULD BE KEY HERE, SINCE BISHARA DOES HAVE HIGH STANDING AND CONSIDERABLE LATITUDE. IN THIS SITUATION, IT APPEARS THAT IMAM SHOULD BE WATCHED, BISHARA SOUNDED OUT, AND THE GOK APPROACHED ON CLOSE ISSUES OF HIGH IMPORTANCE TO THE USG. BECAUSE OF BISHARA'S AUTONOMY AND PRICKLY NATURE, HOWEVER, WE WOULD THINK IT UNPRODUCTIVE TO TRY TO CHANGE HIS MIND OR PRESS THE MFA ON AN ISSUE WITH WHICH WE ARE SATISFIED THAT HE FULLY AGREES WITH IMAM. IN THIS EVENT, ANY USG REPRESENTATION WOULD BE ON A NOTHING-VENTURED-NOTHING-GAINED BASIS.

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